



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 10**

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155  
Seattle, WA 98101-3188

ENFORCEMENT &  
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE  
DIVISION

Reply To: 20-C04

**RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Mr. Derek Hamill  
Owner  
Vision Diesel Performance, LLC  
12142 Sky Lane Northeast, Suite 100  
Aurora, Oregon 97002

Re: Notice of Potential Violation and Opportunity to Confer

Dear Mr. Hamill:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has investigated and continues to investigate Vision Diesel Performance, LLC ("Respondent" or "you"), for compliance with the Clean Air Act (CAA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 7401–7671q and its implementing regulations. Information currently available to EPA suggests that Respondent may have committed violations of Sections 203(a)(3)(A) and (B) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7522(a)(3)(A) and (B), as discussed in the enclosed Summary of Potential Violations ("Summary"). Specifically, information currently available to EPA suggests that Respondent has removed and/or rendered inoperative devices or elements of design installed on or in motor vehicles or motor vehicle engines and has manufactured, sold, offered to sell or installed parts or components where a principle effect of the part or component is to bypass, defeat or render inoperative devices or elements of design of those motor vehicles or engines that were installed by the original equipment manufacturer in order to comply with CAA emission standards.

By this letter, EPA is extending to you an opportunity to advise EPA, via a conference call or in writing, of any further information EPA should consider with respect to the potential violations, including the specific findings of violation, any efforts you have taken to comply and the steps you will take to prevent future violations. If you wish to confer with EPA regarding the allegations in the enclosed Summary or provide a written response, please contact Charlotte Papp at (206) 553-8582 or [papp.charlotte@epa.gov](mailto:papp.charlotte@epa.gov) within 10 days of receipt of this letter. Contacts from legal counsel should be directed to Shirin Gallagher, Assistant Regional Counsel, at (206) 553-4194 or [Gallagher.shirin@epa.gov](mailto:Gallagher.shirin@epa.gov). Please provide any written response you choose to provide within 30 days of receipt of this letter, unless an extension has been requested and granted.

To the extent Respondent submits information to EPA in response to this letter or as part of discussions that result from this letter, Respondent may assert a confidentiality claim covering part or all of the information by placing on (or attaching to) the information, at the time it is

submitted to EPA, a cover sheet, stamped or typed legend or other suitable form of notice employing language such as “trade secret,” “proprietary” or “company confidential.” Allegedly confidential portions of otherwise non-confidential documents should be clearly identified by Respondent and may be submitted separately to facilitate identification and handling by EPA. Information covered by such a claim will be disclosed by EPA only to the extent and by the procedures set forth in statutes and 40 C.F.R. Part 2, Subpart B. Unless you make a claim at the time you submit the information in the manner described in 40 C.F.R. § 2.203(b), it may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to you. 40 CFR 2.203; see also 41 Fed. Reg. 36902 (Sept. 1, 1976).

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Morgan Jencius, Chief  
Air and Land Enforcement Branch

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Stewart D. Cables  
Hassan + Cables, LLC

## Summary of Potential Violations

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing this Notice of Potential Violation and Opportunity to Confer to Vision Diesel Performance, LLC (Respondent or you).

### **Statutory and Regulatory Background**

1. Part A of Title II of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7521–7554, and the regulations promulgated thereunder were enacted to reduce air pollution from mobile sources, including particulate matter (PM), non-methane hydrocarbons (NMHC), oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), and carbon monoxide (CO). In creating the CAA, Congress found, in part, that “the increasing use of motor vehicles . . . has resulted in mounting dangers to the public health and welfare.” CAA § 101(a)(2), 42 U.S.C. § 7401(a)(2).
2. EPA’s allegations here concern parts or components for motor vehicles and engines subject to emission standards. The CAA requires EPA to prescribe and revise, by regulation, standards applicable to the emission of any air pollutant from new motor vehicles or engines that cause or contribute to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare. See CAA § 202(a)(1) and (3)(B), 42 U.S.C. § 7521(a)(1) and (3)(B). As required by the CAA, the emission standards must “reflect the greatest degree of emission reduction achievable through the application of [available] technology.” CAA § 202(a)(3)(A)(i), 42 U.S.C. § 7521(a)(3)(A)(i).
3. Section 216(2) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7550(2), defines “motor vehicle” as “any self-propelled vehicle designed for transporting persons or property on a street or highway.” See also 40 C.F.R. § 85.1703 (further defining “motor vehicle”).
4. Under Section 202 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7521, EPA promulgated emission standards for PM, NMHC, NO<sub>x</sub>, and CO applicable to motor vehicles and motor vehicle engines, including heavy-diesel duty trucks, based on a vehicle’s or engine’s class and model year. See generally 40 C.F.R. Part 86.
5. Section 203(a)(1) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7522(a)(1), prohibits a manufacturer of motor vehicles or motor vehicle engines from selling, offering to sell, importing, or introducing or delivering for introduction into commerce any new motor vehicle or motor vehicle engine in the United States unless the motor vehicle or motor vehicle engine is covered by a certificate of conformity. EPA issues certificates of conformities to motor vehicle and motor vehicle engine manufacturers (also known as “original equipment manufacturers” or “OEMs”) under Section 206(a) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7525(a), to certify that a particular group of motor vehicles or motor vehicle engines conforms to applicable EPA requirements governing motor vehicle emissions.
6. To obtain a certificate of conformity for a given motor vehicle or motor vehicle engine family, the original equipment manufacturer must demonstrate that such motor vehicle or motor vehicle engine will not exceed established emission standards for PM, NMHC, NO<sub>x</sub>, CO, and other pollutants. 40 C.F.R. §§ 86.004-21, 86.1844-01. The application for a certificate of conformity must include, among other things, identification of the covered

engine family, a description of the motor vehicle or engine and its emission control systems, all auxiliary emission control devices (AECDs) and the engine parameters they monitor, as well as test results from a test vehicle or engine showing that it meets the applicable emission standards. 40 C.F.R. §§ 86.004-21, 86.007-21, 86.094-21, 86.1844-01.

7. An AECD is “any element of design which senses temperature, vehicle speed, engine RPM, transmission gear, manifold vacuum, or any other parameter for the purpose of activating, modulating, delaying, or deactivating the operation of any part of the emission control system.” 40 C.F.R. §§ 86.082-2, 86.1803-01.
8. “Element of design” means “any control system (i.e., computer software, electronic control system, emission control system, computer logic), and/or control system calibrations, and/or the results of systems interaction, and/or hardware items on a motor vehicle or motor vehicle engine.” 40 C.F.R. §§ 86.094-2, 86.1803-01.
9. To meet the emission standards in 40 C.F.R. Part 86 and qualify for a certificate of conformity, motor vehicle and motor vehicle engine manufacturers use a variety of hardware and software devices and elements of design.
10. Manufacturers employ certain hardware devices as emission control systems to manage and treat exhaust to reduce levels of regulated pollutants from being created or emitted into the ambient air and meet the emission standards in 40 C.F.R. Part 86. Such devices include exhaust gas recirculation (EGR), diesel oxidation catalyst (DOC), diesel particulate filters (DPFs), and selective catalytic reduction (SCR).
11. In addition to emission control hardware, various elements of design incorporated into motor vehicles, such as fuel mass, fuel injection pressure, and fuel injection timing, can affect the quantity of regulated pollutants that are created by the engine. As an example, original equipment manufacturers of heavy-duty diesel trucks generally employ retarded fuel injection timing as an emission control method for NO<sub>x</sub>. See 59 Fed. Reg. 23,264 at 23,418 (May 5, 1994) (“[I]njection timing has a very significant impact on NO<sub>x</sub> emission rates, with advanced timing settings being associated with higher NO<sub>x</sub> ...”).
12. Modern vehicles and engines are equipped with electronic control modules (ECMs) and onboard diagnostic systems (OBDS). ECMs continuously monitor engine and other operating parameters to manage the operation of the emission control systems and elements of design, such as fuel injection timing. The OBD detects and reports malfunctions of emission-related elements of design through a network of sensors installed throughout a motor vehicle or motor vehicle engine. CAA § 202(m), 42 U.S.C. § 7521(m); see 40 C.F.R. §§ 86.007-17, 86.010-18, 86.1806-05.
13. Section 203(a)(3)(B) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7522(a)(3)(B), makes it unlawful for “any person to manufacture or sell, or offer to sell, or install, any part or component intended for use with, or as part of, any motor vehicle or motor vehicle engine, where a principal effect of the part or component is to bypass, defeat, or render inoperative any device or element of design installed on or in a motor vehicle or motor vehicle engine in

compliance with regulations under [Title II of the CAA], and where the person knows or should know that such part or component is being offered for sale or installed for such use or put to such use.” It is also a violation for any person to cause any of the acts listed above. CAA § 203(a), 42 U.S.C. § 7522(a).

14. Section 203(a)(3)(A) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7522(a)(3)(A), makes it unlawful for “any person to remove or render inoperative any device or element of design installed on or in a motor vehicle or motor vehicle engine in compliance with regulations under [Title II of the CAA] prior to its sale and delivery to the ultimate purchaser, or for any person knowingly to remove or render inoperative any such device or element of design after such sale and delivery to the ultimate purchaser.” It is also a violation for any person to cause any of the acts listed above. CAA § 203(a), 42 U.S.C. § 7522(a).
15. Any person who violates Section 203(a)(3) of CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7522(a)(3), is subject to injunctive relief under Section 204 of CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7523, and a civil penalty of up to \$4,876 for each violation. CAA § 205(a), 42 U.S.C. § 7524(a); 40 C.F.R. § 19.4, Table 1.
16. EPA may bring an enforcement action for violations of Section 203(a)(3) of the Clean Air Act under its administrative authority or by referring this matter to the United States Department of Justice with a recommendation that a civil complaint be filed in federal district court. CAA §§ 204 and 205, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7523 and 7524.

### **Proposed Findings**

17. Respondent operates an automotive repair shop located at 12142 Sky Lane NE, Suite 100, Aurora, Oregon.
18. Respondent is a “person,” as defined in Section 302(e) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7602(e).
19. On October 5, 2020, EPA sent an information request (Information Request) to Respondent under Section 208 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7542, requiring the submission of, among other things, information related to Respondent’s manufacture, sale, offer for sale, and installation of parts, components, and services (products) which bypass, defeat, or render inoperative any emission control component, element of design, or emissions related part or component.

### **Defeat Devices**

20. Based on Respondent’s response to EPA’s Information Request and other available information, from October 24, 2018 to October 5, 2020 Respondent manufactured, sold, offered for sale or installed at least 206 parts or components designed and marketed for use with or as part of motor vehicles or motor vehicle engines. This includes:
  - a. At least 47 exhaust replacement pipes that allow the customer to remove the control equipment of the exhaust system such as the diesel oxidation catalyst and

the DPF. An example of an exhaust replacement pipe that Respondent sold is the “4” CAT/DPF Race Kit,” Part Number 857NB. This product includes two pipes and various hardware to be used to replace the OEM exhaust system. The installation of this device requires disconnecting sensors, as well as the complete removal of the exhaust aftertreatment system required by the manufacturer’s certificate of conformity.

- b. At least 112 EGR removal products that allow the customer to disable the EGR system. The installation of a blocker plate prevents the flow of exhaust gas into the EGR cooler system and air intake system, thus rendering the EGR system inoperative.
  - c. At least 47 tuning products that allow the customer to remove the emission control components. These tuning products were installed alongside the above-mentioned defeat hardware. These products alter the ECM/OBD systems that control and monitor the OEM exhaust treatment systems. When the treatment systems were removed or rendered inoperative by the installation of the above devices, it became necessary to alter the ECM/OBD monitoring functions in order for the vehicle to be operational. These alterations enable the removal and disabling of the exhaust treatment systems required by the certificate of conformity.
- 21. These parts and components were designed and marketed for use on makes and models of motor vehicles and motor vehicle engines manufactured by entities such as Cummins Inc.; FCA US LLC and its predecessors; General Motors Co.; and Ford Motor Co.
  - 22. These motor vehicles and motor vehicle engines were designed for transporting persons or property on a street or highway, and therefore are subject to motor vehicle and motor vehicle engine emission standards under the CAA Title II, Subpart A, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7521–7554.
  - 23. The original equipment manufacturers of these motor vehicles and motor vehicle engines sought and obtained certificates of conformity from EPA, thereby certifying that the motor vehicles and motor vehicle engines demonstrated compliance with applicable federal emission standards, including design configurations using elements of design such as fuel timing, EGRs, DPFs, SCRs, and OBD systems.
  - 24. The parts and components referred to in Paragraph 20 above, when installed in or on motor vehicles, bypass, defeat, or render inoperative devices or elements of design that motor vehicle and motor vehicle engine manufacturers employ to meet emission standards in regulations promulgated under CAA Title II, Subpart A, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7521–7554.
  - 25. Respondent knew or should have known that these parts or components were sold, offered for sale or installed to bypass, defeat, or render inoperative devices or elements of design that motor vehicle and motor vehicle engine manufacturers employ to meet

emission standards in regulations promulgated under CAA Title II, Part A, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7521–7554.

26. Therefore, from October 24, 2018 to October 5, 2020, Respondent committed at least 206 violations of Section 203(a)(3)(B) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7522(a)(3)(B).

#### Tampering

27. Based on Respondent’s response to EPA’s Information Request and other available information, from October 24, 2018 to October 5, 2020, Respondent knowingly removed or rendered inoperative one or more devices or elements of design installed on or in at least 89 motor vehicles or motor vehicle engines after sale and delivery to the ultimate purchaser.
28. The devices or elements of design removed or rendered inoperative by Respondent had been installed on or in such motor vehicles or motor vehicle engines in compliance with regulations promulgated under CAA Title II, Part A, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7521–7554.
29. Therefore, from October 24, 2018 to October 5, 2020, Respondent committed at least 89 violations of Section 203(a)(3)(A) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7522(a)(3)(A).